

PALESTINIAN PROBLEMS

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The national Jews (the "new Yishuv") who have been coming to Palestine since 1882, and who had already departed from traditional Judaism, were at first a small minority in the midst of orthodox Jewry, the "old Yishuv". Even in 1914 about two-thirds of the 85,000 Jewish inhabitants of Palestine still belonged to the old orthodox type, and only one-third to the new national, progressive section. The proportion was, however, completely reversed by the War; the old people in the towns suffered severely and many of them died, while immigration on a large scale set in after 1918. By 1922 only about half of the Palestinian Jews were orthodox, and, in 1933, only about one-fifth. The orthodox Jews live chiefly in Jerusalem, where they form more than half of the Jewish population. The main body and the leaders of orthodox Jewry are of East European extraction and still speak Yiddish, but they have been joined by many Sephardic and Oriental Jews. The new Yishuv is not uniform in its attitude towards religion. Although the large majority have departed from tradition and represent all degrees of "progressive" Judaism, a small minority belong to "Mizrachi", who, contrary to non-Zionist orthodoxy, lay stress on the national character of Jewish life, but desire to combine it with religious tradition.

Jewish religion in Palestine has blended with national life. Old religious customs, partly or entirely obsolete in Europe, have been revived in Palestine—the strict observance of the Sabbath, the exclusive use of Hebrew as the vernacular in religious services, the Jewish character of the schools, the growth of purely Jewish villages and towns with administrative and cultural self-government, and the coinciding once more of Jewish Feasts with the seasons of the year and agricultural seasons. The ethical character of the work of national reconstruction helps to evoke creative forces in religion. The new religious life can take up old threads in Palestine, and many things regain a meaning and a background which they had lost in the Diaspora. Certain symbols and cere-